

Appln No. 09/909,358

Amdt date March 4, 2004

Reply to Office action of December 5, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-24 and 30-31 are in the present application, of which claims 1 and 30 are independent. Claims 8 and 10 have been amended herein. New claims 30 and 31 have been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-24. Further, applicants respectfully request consideration on the merits and allowance of claims 30 and 31.

Claims 1-4, 10, 13, 18 and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,772,905 ("Chou"). In addition, claims 5-9, 11, 12, 14-17, 19-22 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Chou.

The Office Action states "Chou teaches . . . [t]he body may be silicon or other materials. Therefore, it is expected that it is mechanically relatively flexible as compared with typical steel mold." Applicants traverse the above statement in the Office Action and the rejection of claims 1-24 because of at least the following reasons.

Applicants do not agree that "it is expected that [the body] is mechanically relatively flexible as compared with typical steel mold." For example, the silicon substrate is typically brittle and not flexible. Applicants do not see in Chou any teaching or suggestion that the silicon substrate or any other materials used in Chou for the body is a flexible type. Further, the imprint master of the present invention is not merely "mechanically relatively flexible as compared with

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typical steel mold," but it is "mechanically flexible" in an absolute sense.

Further, Chou on column 6, lines 27-30 teaches that "[s]ubstrate 18 and body 12 [of the mold 10] should be sufficiently stiff to reduce bending while forming the imprint. Such bending leads to deformation in the pattern formed in the film 20." (Emphasis Added) A primary definition of the word "stiff" is "not easily bent," and a synonym for the word "stiff" is "rigid." Hence, applicants do not see how Chou can teach or suggest using a mechanically flexible (i.e., bendable or not rigid) imprint master, while at the same time teaching using sufficiently stiff material for the body of the mold [which appears to be equated with the imprint master of the present invention] to reduce bending because such bending leads to [presumably undesirable] deformation formed in the film. Further, FIGs. 1A and 1B of Chou, which illustrate the mold 10, do not show that it is bent in any way.

The claims of Chou also clearly show that using stiff material for the mold is important to the invention of Chou. All of the independent claims 1, 14 and 19 each recite "obtaining a mold of a stiff material." (Emphasis Added). Therefore, Chou does not claim any material for the mold, but a stiff material.

The flexible/bendable nature of the imprint master is further emphasized in claim 21 of the present invention which depends from claim 1. Claim 21 recites, in a relevant portion, "bending the imprint master one of prior to and during the step of contacting." Chou does not even teach or suggest that the

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mold 10 is flexible, much less "bending the imprint master." Applicants submit that this patentably distinguishable feature of claim 21 was not specifically addressed in the Office Action.

Claim 1 recites, in a relevant portion, "providing a negative image of a pattern in a fixed medium on a mechanically flexible imprint master." Since the cited references do not teach or suggest such a mechanically flexible imprint master, applicants request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn and that it be allowed.

Since claims 2-24 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1, they incorporate all the terms and limitations of claim 1 in addition to other limitations, which together further patentably distinguish them over the cited references. Therefore, applicants request that the rejection of claims 2-24 be withdrawn and that they be allowed.

New claims 30 and 31 have been added to further clarify a patentably distinguishable feature of the present invention.

Claim 30 recites, in a relevant portion, "bending the imprint master such that the central portion of the imprint master first contacts the deformable material." Since the cited references do not teach or suggest such "bending the imprint master," applicants request that claim 30 be allowed.

Since claim 31 depends from claim 30, it incorporates all the terms and limitations of claim 30 in addition to other limitations, which together further patentably distinguish it over the cited references. Therefore, applicants request that claim 31 be allowed as well.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully request an early issuance of a patent with claims 1-24 and 30-31. If there are any remaining issues that can be addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is invited to call applicants' attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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